

For Immediate Release

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ABC Enforcement Focus on Oxford

At the request of the City of Oxford and the University of Mississippi, Alcohol Beverage Control agents increased law enforcement operations during the month of November in Oxford. As a result, there were 115 arrests with 174 charges filed. Most of the 115 persons arrested were students at the University of Mississippi.

As part of this detail, ABC Agents conducted surveillance, patrolled night-spots, and posed as employees in businesses that serve alcohol. "We have a big problem in Oxford with students purchasing alcohol with fraudulent identification. This presents a challenge for law enforcement and retailers." says Mark Hicks, Director of Enforcement for the Mississippi ABC.

The ABC recently purchased 3 identification scanners with grant money made available by the Mississippi Department of Public Safety. These scanners provide the agents ability to quickly validate a driver's license for authenticity. "I think our efforts over the past month have paid off. Business owners and students alike are starting to change their attitudes. Our goal is to help make our college towns safer" says Hicks.

The ABC is currently planning training for Oxford area retailers on Mississippi alcohol laws and strategies to deal with fake identification cards. The ABC will continue working with the City of Oxford concerning alcohol and minors.

The ABC routinely conducts enforcement operations in other college towns across the state. ABC Enforcement received a federal grant for the enforcement of underage drinking laws during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006. This project dealt with increased enforcement in our college towns with a special emphasis on home football game weekends. As a result of the grant, 607 arrests were made for offenses dealing with minors and alcohol. For this, ABC Enforcement was recognized for a grant project "Success Story" at the National Leadership Conference for the Enforcement of Underage Drinking laws.

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